

Keuw language

Keuw (Keu, Kehu) is an unclassified language of New Guinea.

Keuw is spoken in a swampy lowland region along the Poronai River in Keuw village (kampung) of Wapoga District, Nabire Regency, Papua province, Indonesia. According to oral folklore, the Keuw were originally from Woisaru, and then moved to Sanawado, which may be locations in Wapoga District.^[3]

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Classification

Mark Donohue (2007) said that Kehu is "probably a Geelvink Bay language, but no one knows enough about those languages, systematically, to say this with confidence for [any of them] beyond Barapasi, T(ar)unggare and Bauzi."^[4]

Timothy Usher (2018) classifies it as a Lakes Plain language, closest to Awera and Rasawa–Saponi. According to Foley, based on some lexical and phonological similarities, Keuw may possibly share a deep relationship with the Lakes Plain languages.^[5] Palmer (2018) treats Keuw as a language isolate.^[6]

Phonology

Phonology of Keuw from Kamholz (2012), quoted in Foley (2018):^[7]^[5]

Consonants

Keuw has ten consonants.

Keuw	
Kehu	
Native to	Papua
Region	Wapoga River, in the foothills inland from Cenderawasih Bay: Wapoga District, Nabire Regency, Papua province
Native speakers	200 (2007) ^[1]
Language family	Lakes Plain? <div>▪ Wapoga<div>▪ Keuw</div></div>
Language codes	
ISO 639-3	khh
Glottolog	kehu1238 (http://glottolog.org/resource/language/id/kehu1238) ^[2]

p	t		k
b	d		g
	s		
	l		
w		j	

Vowels

Keuw has five vowels.

i	u
e	o
a	

Tone

Keuw has contrastive tone. Some minimal pairs demonstrating phonemic tonal contrasts:

- *áalìyò* ‘tongue’, *áalíyò* ‘house’
- *kíilyô* ‘possum’, *kíilyò* ‘arrow’
- *úukyò* ‘grandfather’, *úunyô* ‘woman’

Syntax

Keuw has SOV word order, as exemplified by the sentence below. The morphemic suffixes remain unglossed.^[5]

kómúul-yò yúmséet-yò núu-nô
boar-? cassava-? eat-?

‘The boar ate the cassava.’

Basic vocabulary

Basic vocabulary of Keuw from Kamholz (2012), quoted in Foley (2018):^{[8][5]}

Keuw basic vocabulary

gloss	Keuw
'bird'	páupən
'blood'	kpíi
'bone'	ntyéns
'breast'	túulí
'ear'	téemé
'eat'	núu
'egg'	bléemí
'eye'	mlúul
'fire'	núup
'go'	páwì
'ground'	píi
'hair'	plíikd
'head'	kpúunt
'leg'	páud
'louse (body)'	máa
'louse (head)'	bréen
'man'	méeli
'moon'	dyúutən
'one'	bíisìp
'path, road'	ngkéempúkə
'see'	líyè, tíyè, kúntáb
'sky'	tpáapí
'stone'	tóotí
'sun'	tandən
'tooth'	mée
'tree'	kúd
'two'	páid
'water'	yél
'woman'	úun

References

1. Keuw (<https://www.ethnologue.com/18/language/khh/>) at *Ethnologue* (18th ed., 2015)
2. Hammarström, Harald; Forkel, Robert; Haspelmath, Martin, eds. (2017). "Kehu" (<http://glottolog.org/resource/languoid/id/kehu1238>). *Glottolog 3.0*. Jena, Germany: Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History.
3. Kamholz, David. 2012. *The Keuw isolate: Preliminary materials and classification* (<http://www.langxmelanesia.com/8%20kamholz243-268.pdf>). In Harald Hammarström and Wilco van den

Heuvel (eds.), History, contact, and classification of Papuan languages, 243–268. Special issue of *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia*. Port Moresby: Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea.

4. Donohue (2007) (<http://mailman.anu.edu.au/pipermail/papuanlanguages/2007-May/000142.html>)
5. Foley, William A. (2018). "The languages of Northwest New Guinea". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 433–568. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
6. Palmer, Bill (2018). "Language families of the New Guinea Area". In Palmer, Bill (ed.). *The Languages and Linguistics of the New Guinea Area: A Comprehensive Guide*. The World of Linguistics. 4. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. pp. 1–20. ISBN 978-3-11-028642-7.
7. Kamholz, David. 2012. The Keuw isolate: preliminary materials and classification. *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia Special Issue: History, Contact and Classification of Papuan Languages*: 243–268.
8. Kamholz, David. 2012. The Keuw isolate: preliminary materials and classification. *Language and Linguistics in Melanesia Special Issue: History, Contact and Classification of Papuan Languages*: 243–268.

External links

- [Keuw field recordings \(https://lautgesetz.com/keuw/\)](https://lautgesetz.com/keuw/)
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